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Role of plasma and serum proteases in the degradation of elastin.

Romero N, Tinker D, Hyde D, Rucker RB.

Accelerated proteolysis of tropoelastin and elastin occurs in the major arteries of chicks fed copper-deficient diets. Signs of elastin degradation are not obvious in normal arteries of copper-supplemented chicks. It is proposed that the sources of proteases that effect elastin degradation are from plasma and serum. Both calcium-dependent proteases and kallikrein were effective in degrading tropoelastin and partially crosslinked insoluble elastin into peptides similar to those detected in aortic extracts from copper-deficient chicks. As dietary copper deficiency progresses it is also possible to detect elastin peptides in plasma.

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